

## **Outcomes**

Conference Call, 16 March 2011

The Humanitarian Forum convened a conference call on 16 March 2011 to discuss the crisis in Libya. This brought together 22 humanitarian organisations from the multilateral system, Europe and the Middle East. The conference call provided up-to-date information from the Egyptian and Tunisian borders, and from inside Libya. It also engaged a new group of humanitarian actors. Some of the participating organizations gave a brief update of their efforts (for more details please view annex). Below is an overview of the discussion:

The humanitarian situation is “not promising”, with a high risk of escalating needs in the near future. The UN is organising contingency planning. Update information is available on <http://northafrica.humanitarianresponse.info>

The participants agreed that is important to collaborate to ensure the response to the escalating humanitarian needs can be optimized (e.g. share up-to-date information, contacts). Participants also agreed that it is important to be aware of existing coordination mechanisms to avoid duplication of efforts.

### **Situation report and needs**

#### **Libya**

- There is little information from within Libya. Needs (type and extent) are largely unknown but are likely to be significant. Emerging reports from UNOCHA are worrying. Participants expressed their concern at the scale of violence. All sides were urged to respect International Humanitarian Law throughout the country.
- OIC is assessing needs through a team in Libya.
- Reports on medical needs are conflicting. Participants stressed the need for greater clarity on the immediate requirements. However sources confirm that there is a need for: ambulances, medicines (chemotherapy and retrovirals), nurses and general and orthopaedic surgeons. Medical needs will become more acute especially as the unrest continues.

- Humanitarian access and security are very poor and need to be improved. Some organisations have had to withdraw their staff from areas, such as Benghazi and Musrata.
- Other needs are: basic food, (sugar, rice and oil), dry baby milk powder, information, restoring safe communication network.
- Logistics – and humanitarian access – are a challenge. The long distances from Egypt could be overcome if Marsa Matruh airport was opened for humanitarian organisations.
- Large numbers of third country nationals remain inside Libya.

### **Egyptian border (Saloum)**

- There is a changing trend of those crossing the border over the last 2 days, from a majority of Egyptians to a majority of Libyans.
- The numbers of people crossing the border is expected to rise.
- The main need on the border is shelter, but there seems to be sufficient supply of food and water.

### **Tunisian border**

- 3 refugee camps with capacity of more than 10 refugees.
- The main needs are: hygiene, shelter particularly for families, increased evacuation of third country nationals, basic health services.
- There are fears of outbreak of disease.
- All needs will increase when the Libyan border opens, since the number of displaced people is likely to increase significantly.

### **Next steps**

- The participants agreed to a face-to-face meeting to ensure humanitarian needs and information are disseminated and efforts are coordinated. The Humanitarian Forum will convene this in Cairo on 24 March and extend invitation to organizations operational within Libya or at the borders. Venue and meeting details will be confirmed.
- The UN is organising contingency planning and will circulate this to the conference call participants. This will be an important basis for discussion in Cairo.
- Participants are encouraged to send update reports etc to The Humanitarian Forum to circulate to wider humanitarian community.

## List of Participating Organizations

- **British Red Cross** (UK)
- **Department for International Development** (UK)
- **Disasters Emergency Committee** (UK)
- **Human Appeal International** (UK)
- **International Committee for the Red Cross** (Switzerland)
- **IHH** The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (Turkey)
- **International Federation of Red Crescent Societies** (Jordan)
- **Islamic Development Bank** (KSA)
- **Islamic Relief Worldwide** (UK)
- **League of Arab States** (Egypt)
- **Medecins sans Frontieres** (Lebanon)
- **Muslim Charities Forum** (UK)
- **Office for the Coordination of Foreign Assistance** (UAE)
- **Organization of Islamic Conference** (KSA)
- **Oxfam** (UK)
- **Relief International** (UK)
- **Qatar Charity** (Qatar)
- **Qatar Red Crescent**
- **Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response** (Switzerland)
- **Scouts** (Tunisia)
- **UN IRIN News Service** (UAE)
- **UN OCHA** Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Egypt)
- **World Assembly for Muslim Youth** (KSA)
- **World Vision** (Switzerland)
- **The Humanitarian Forum** (UK)
- **International Islamic Charitable Organization** (Kuwait)
- **International Islamic Relief Org** (KSA)
- **CISP** (Italy)

## Annex

Participants gave a brief summary of their intervention:

- ICRC: See statement below.
- MSF: Due to the recent events, MSF had had to withdraw its team from inside Libya. However, it had supported hospitals situated in Benghazi with donations of drugs and medical supplies. It had also had a team deployed on the Tunisian border.
- WAMY: has focused on the provision of medical supplies. Response to medical needs is being mobilized from the office in Cairo.
- Qatar Red Crescent: In close collaboration with the Tunisian Red Crescent, Qatar Red Crescent undertook a needs assessment to prioritize needs. It has provided basic support (such as clothes and hygiene kits) to the camps managed by the Tunisian Red Crescent. It is currently undertaking a medical needs assessment to ensure sufficient medical support is also provided.
- IIRO: has also been focusing on medical assistance.
- Islamic Relief Worldwide: is focusing on nutrition, shelter and sanitation. It has distributed food parcels and water, hygiene kits, clothes. IRW has also set-up transitional camps.

### **Red Cross and Red Crescent movement**

The ICRC has, since the beginning of the crisis in Libya, in close coordination with the Libyan, Tunisian and Egyptian Red Crescent Societies, with the International Federation respectively, rapidly deployed on the borders of Libya with Egypt and Tunisia, and sent expatriate teams inside the country by the end of February. The ICRC team in side, in close cooperation with the LRCS, has mainly worked in medical emergency response in Tobruk, Benghazi, Brega and other locations, has trained local medical staff on war surgery, has supported local structures with medical equipment and medicines. ICRC has further worked notably on protection issues of stranded migrant workers in coordination with other agencies.

On the border with Egypt and Tunisia, the ICRC is supporting actively the Egyptian and Tunisian Red Crescent societies to respond to the needs of civilians leaving Libya (safe and well calls, assistance etc).

The ICRC, the International Federation and the Libyan, Egyptian and Tunisian Red Crescent Societies have made a joint statement on their response to humanitarian needs in Libya and neighbouring countries, and on their respective coordination schemes. The ICRC and its Movement partners are also coordinating with UN, non-UN humanitarian actors and NGO's present in the region.

The ICRC remains extremely concerned by the intensification of the fighting and mounting casualties in Libya. We urge all those involved in the non-international armed conflict to respect international humanitarian law, in particular: to distinguish between civilians and fighters, to spare civilian lives, and to respect and protect medical facilities, ambulances and all humanitarian workers.

<http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/news-release/2011/libya-news-2011-03-10.htm>

The ICRC has established contacts at several levels with Libyan authorities to notify its presence in the country and to offer its services to address humanitarian needs in all parts of Libya.